

**Testimony of  
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**Before the House Subcommittee on  
National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations**

**And the House Subcommittee on  
Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources**

**December 13, 2005**

Chairman Shays, Chairman Souder, and Subcommittee members, it is a pleasure to be here today.

My name is Greg Purdy. I am the director of Safety, Security and Environment for Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., a global cruise vacation company operating 28 ships under the Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises brands.

Regarding my background, I am a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and have earned a post graduate degree. I served in the U.S. Coast Guard for 16 years in a variety of positions, one of which was the commanding officer of a cutter. My experience includes law enforcement activities, narcotics and migrant interdiction and security matters – both within the United States and internationally. I have been with Royal Caribbean almost five years, the majority of that time in my current position.

As you can see, my career has focused on safety and security issues, both within the U.S. government and the private sector.

To begin, I would like to provide you with an overview of the extensive measures taken by our company concerning safety and security operations onboard our ships. I will then address the specific questions you provided in your letter of invitation to this hearing.

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The highest priority of our company is to ensure the safety and security of all our guests and crew members. We care about everyone on our ships. We are concerned about their wellbeing. We do this because it is the right thing to do, and, because it is just good business.

As you know, crime can touch any of us – in virtually any setting. This is one of the sad realities of our society today. In terms of our ships, one crime is one too many. It is impossible to be immune to crime, but we work diligently to prevent it and we are committed to the safety and security of everyone onboard our ships.

Since the founding of our company, some 35 years ago, we have maintained a safety- and security-focused culture. This includes close working relationships with law enforcement agencies in the United States and throughout the world, extensive security policies and procedures, a significant security staff and infrastructure, and the utilization of state-of-the-art security technology.

Royal Caribbean actively participates in an industry-based security committee, which is part of the International Council of Cruise Lines. This group, which involves a variety of U.S. federal law enforcement agencies, meets every 60 days to discuss coordination between our industry and these agencies, and many other security issues. To facilitate these activities involving various law enforcement agencies, members of our staff have U.S. security clearances and secure methods of communications. We work with these agencies, as well as with private security consultants, to identify and mitigate security risks in all areas of the world in which we operate.

Regarding our ships, our security measures include the screening of all luggage, carry-ons and provisions coming onto our ships. This screening is conducted with X-ray machines, metal detectors, hand searches, sniffer dogs and other methods.

Every one of our ships has a Security Officer, who is a trained military veteran or career security specialist. Their sole responsibility is to ensure the safety of our guests and crew. These Security Officers oversee teams of trained security staff who are responsible for security procedures onboard our ships – 24-hours a day. Surveillance cameras throughout our ships assist these efforts.

Our onboard security operations also include trained divers on each ship. These divers can search ship hulls and ports at which we call, and work in coordination with various law enforcement agencies.

All of our ships use an access control system we call SeaPass. This system is not mandated – rather it is a company initiative we have chosen to implement. The SeaPass system provides all guests and crew members with an ID card – similar to a credit card – which provides us access to their digital photo and personal identification information. Each time a guest or crew member boards or departs a ship, they must swipe their card. Security staff compare the photo and personal identification information on a computer screen with the person standing before them. This technology allows the ship to know which guests and crew members are registered onboard and which are not – at any given time. This card also serves as the stateroom key for guests.

Our company works regularly and closely with local, state, federal, and international authorities, such as the port authorities where our ships call, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, as well as Interpol and various foreign authorities.

The close relationships we have built and maintain with these agencies, have served to further enhance the safety and security of everyone onboard our ships.

All guests and all crew members, on all sailings, are placed on an official manifest. Ships sailing to or from the U.S. submit these manifests in advance to U.S. federal law enforcement agencies for analysis. The manifests are reviewed for a variety of reasons, primary among them, safety and security issues.

Additionally, all of our crew members throughout the world who are not U.S. or Canadian citizens are required to have a U.S. C1 / D visa – which includes vetting by the U.S. Department of State.

There are additional measures in place to ensure the security of our guests and crew. However, in order to maintain an effective and meaningful security environment, these confidential security procedures cannot, for obvious reasons, be discussed publicly, in detail. I would be happy to meet with you or your staff privately, should the need arise to discuss some of these sensitive issues.

Our company maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy on crime.

Whenever an allegation of a crime involves a U.S. citizen, it is our policy and our practice to report it to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As stated previously, on matters related to safety and security, we work closely with the FBI, the U.S. Coast Guard, international authorities and private security consultants.

Cruise ships are one of the safest ways to travel – and crime onboard cruise ships is extremely rare. On those occasions when an allegation does arise, we work very hard to assist our guests or crew members, as well as their families. We fully cooperate with any investigation conducted by any law enforcement agency or prosecutor's office. Again, we do this because it's the right thing to do, and, because we are genuinely concerned about everyone onboard our ships.

We understand the impact a crime can have, not only on the victim, but also on family members and traveling companions. We constantly work to prevent crime from occurring, to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in their investigation, and to assist those who are affected.

I would like to take a moment to address an issue that is of particular interest to you Chairman Shays. This is the matter of George Smith.

The Smith family has suffered an unimaginable loss, and we extend our deepest sympathies to the family.

We do not know what happened to George Smith – only that he tragically disappeared from a cruise – but we continue to cooperate fully with the FBI in the hope that the agency will be able to provide solid answers and some measure of closure for the Smith family.

As to Royal Caribbean's efforts, we believe – that despite this terrible tragedy – the cruise line handled George Smith's disappearance correctly and responsibly. Specifically, we responded to the sole complaint made by a guest, we promptly called in the FBI and local authorities to conduct an investigation, we secured the Smith's cabin and the metal overhang and we conducted a thorough search of the ship.

We subsequently interviewed guests and crew who had any knowledge of the Smith's whereabouts that night, and we collected all possible evidence – from security-camera tapes to charge-card receipts – and provided it to the FBI.

We know this is a traumatic time for George Smith's wife, parents, other family members and friends, but we believe we responded appropriately, and we will continue to work with the FBI until George Smith's disappearance is explained.

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In reference to the issues you outlined in your letter of invitation, I provide you with the following information.

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With regard to national and international laws involving security, I would defer to Michael Crye, president of the International Council of Cruise Lines. He is best suited to explain those issues on an industry-wide basis. In addition to Mr. Crye's comments, I would reiterate that whenever a U.S. citizen is involved in an alleged crime, the FBI is notified by our company. As I previously stated, on security matters we work closely with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, as well as Interpol and various foreign authorities.

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In reference to statistics regarding security incidents, our company operates in the same manner as others in the hotel, resort, vacation and leisure industries. Incidents or allegations are reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. We then work with those agencies to determine the best course of action to ensure the safety of our guests and crew. In the case of an alleged crime, prosecutors work with those agencies to determine if sufficient evidence exists to bring a prosecution. As with the other industries I mentioned, the public is able to contact the appropriate agencies to seek any statistics they maintain.

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Although terrorism and piracy have never impacted our ships, we prepare for these issues in a variety of ways. In the exceedingly rare circumstance where our company has received a threat – and, it is worth noting that we have never received a threat that the FBI has deemed credible – we immediately contact the FBI and the U.S. Coast Guard. In these situations, we work in close coordination with these agencies. This has involved providing our guests with letters informing them of the situation, explaining the involvement of the agencies, and our cooperation in the investigation.

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Our company has a variety of procedures in place to deal with possible attacks on our ships. These are internationally recognized methods used by maritime organizations throughout the world. As I mentioned previously, this is an issue that touches on sensitive security procedures that could be rendered ineffective if discussed in a public forum such as this. I would be happy to meet with you and your staff privately to have a detailed discussion on specific tactics we would employ.

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As I mentioned earlier, should a crime be alleged involving a U.S. citizen, regardless of where the ship is in the world, the matter is reported to the FBI – and to all other appropriate law enforcement agencies. It is also our policy to fully cooperate with any investigation conducted by any law enforcement agency.

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Our ships operate under the Maritime Transportation Security Act, passed by Congress following 9/11, the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, as well as the International Safety Management Code. Under these security protocols, the worldwide maritime industry has actually adopted many of the security plans and practices previously developed and implemented by the cruise industry.



These requirements include comprehensive ship and terminal security plans, mandatory security drills and exercises, ship security alert systems, and annual audits from which we update and enhance our security plans. Additionally, our company participates in various U.S. and international training and security exercises, many of which are conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security.

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As previously stated, our onboard Security Officers are made up of trained military veterans and career security specialists. These security officers include veterans from the British Royal Navy, Israeli Special Forces and Nepalese Gurkhas. All security staff receives training regarding the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code along with training regarding the use of technical equipment and other security techniques. It should also be noted that all crew members receive security awareness training.

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As I have outlined today, our company and our industry maintain robust safety and security policies and practices. However, I would reiterate that even one incident is one too many.

We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for everyone onboard our ships. Put simply, the wellbeing of our guests and crew will always remain as our highest priority.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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